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expand the limits of human knowledge in any of its branches. While asking Congress to augment the means of instructing young men for different departments of the naval service, he pleads the cause of science in a manner worthy of that enlightened judgment which should characterise all who participate in the direction of nautical affairs. He announces that expeditions to Japan, to the China Seas, to Africa, to the interior of South America, to the Pacific Ocean, and to the Arctic regions, are in progress, or about departing to seek and peacefully open new fields of enterprise; and while he incites the spirit of hardy adventure, he encourages, to the extent of the means in his power, careful observation and scientific observation of natural phenomena. He advocates explorations which promise results beneficial to the agricultural, commercial and manufacturing industries of the country; and for motives apparently analogous to those which animate the members of this institution. Therefore,

*Resolved*, that the Corresponding Secretary be directed to address a letter to the Hon. John P. Kennedy, Secretary of the Navy, expressive of the gratification the Society derives from the disposition he manifests to encourage men engaged in the cultivation of science; a disposition more especially exhibited in the permission given to our fellow member, Dr. E. K. Kane, of the Navy, to undertake the direction and management of an expedition to the north polar regions, to ascertain the fate of Sir John Franklin; an enterprise sustained by the intelligent munificence of Henry Grinnell, Esq; and a few other American gentlemen.

*Resolved*, That science does not limit its benefits and influence to any class or caste of men; being open and free to all alike, it is republican and democratic in its tendency; and therefore, the members of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia may hope that the National Legislature will foster the several expeditions embracing scientific research, by granting such seasonable supplies and substantial encouragement as may be worthy of the most powerful and wealthy republic on the face of the earth.

*Resolved*, That the Corresponding Secretary is hereby instructed to furnish a copy of these resolutions to the President of the Senate of the United States, and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, for the information of Congress, and also to the Secretary of the Navy.

On leave, granted, Mr. Cassin, from the Committee on Dr. Heermann's paper, entitled "Notices of Birds observed in California," reported in favor of publication in the Journal of the Academy, which was adopted.

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*December 21st.*

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

Mr. Cassin presented a paper by P. R. Hoy, M. D., of Racine, Wisconsin, intended for publication in the Proceedings, describing two species of Owls, presumed to be new, inhabiting the State of Wisconsin during the winter season. Referred to Mr. Cassin, Prof. Haldeman and Dr. Heermann.

Mr. Conrad presented a paper intended for publication in the Proceedings, entitled, "Notes on Shells, and descriptions of new species." Referred to Dr. Ruschenberger, Dr. Le Conte and Prof. Haldeman.

Dr. Hallowell presented a paper, intended for publication in the Proceedings, "On a new genus and two new species of African

Serpents;" which was referred to a Committee consisting of Major Le Conte, Prof. Haldeman and Dr. Leidy.

Dr. Genth presented a paper, intended for publication in the Proceedings, entitled. "On a probably new *Element*, with *Iridosmene* and *Platinum*, from California." Referred to Prof. Frazer, Dr. Le Conte and Dr. Bridges.

Prof. Haldeman stated that he had seen, at the recent agricultural exhibition at Lancaster, Pa., a pair of *albino* specimens of *Tamias lysteri* (or *striata*); also a *black* specimen of the same species; which would throw light upon the varieties of the grey squirrels, since it is more likely that these should have black varieties than the uniform species of *Tamias*. The specimen was black throughout, and there were no indications of the lateral stripes. A few scattered hairs of white might be observed on a close inspection. Prof. H. stated further that he had had an idiotic specimen of *Sciurus Hudsonius*, which had the actions of a human idiot. It was thus affected when caught, and was merely able to take its food, but incapable of running or leaping. Its principal actions were turning in a circle and moving the head up and down continually.

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December 28th.

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

The Committee on Mr. Conrad's papers, containing "Remarks on the Tertiary Strata of St. Domingo and Vicksburg," and "Notes on Shells, with descriptions of new species," reported in favor of publication in the Proceedings.

*Remarks on the Tertiary Strata of St. Domingo and Vicksburg, (Miss.)*

By T. A. CONRAD.

The remarkable group of fossils which I discovered at Vicksburg, Miss., in 1845, derives a new interest for the geologist since the discovery of an analogous deposit in St. Domingo, in which are some few of the species of the Vicksburg strata. Whether all the forms of this group in St. Domingo are synchronous remains to be proved, but the probability is that they are. They have been referred to the Miocene period, whilst I had supposed that the Vicksburg strata were more intimately related to those of the Eocene period. I founded this supposition on the following data, viz:

1. No recent species was known, or is yet ascertained to occur in this locality.
2. Two or three fossil shells of the Older Eocene of Alabama are common.
3. No species is identical with, and only two or three analogous to, fossil shells of the American Miocene, even as the group occurs in South Carolina, but little north of the latitude of Vicksburg.
4. The forms have a closer analogy with those of the European Eocene than with any other group of fossils.

It might be supposed that a more southern latitude would vary the Miocene species, but not that the percentage of recent shells would be reduced to zero, nor would an utterly dissimilar group be introduced. The only condition which would seem likely to produce such a result would be a great depth of water, in which the shells had lived and died on the bed of a profounder sea than we have elsewhere any evidence of; but this is not probable, because the presence of so